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The University of Dayton

News Release

June 10, 1992

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NEW COMPUTER PROGRAM ALLOWS COMMUNITIES TO STUDY WASTE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

DAYTON, Ohio -- It's almost like a computer game, and just as simple. But SW-Options is an important tool communities can use to make critical decisions in reducing their waste flow to their landfills.

The software program developed by the University of Dayton Research Institute and Peer Consultants allows communities to quickly weigh their options with just a few keystrokes. Developed under the sponsorship of the Environmental Protection Agency, a prototype of the software is being distributed to communities now.

Ohio EPA's solid waste management plan set a goal for communities to reduce or recycle by 25 percent the amount of waste generated in their communities; other states face similar guidelines. The software will be available to help communities make choices between material recovery, composting, incineration, energy recovery systems and special waste collections.

"It's designed to be very easy to use," said Joe Swartzbaugh, a UDRI research scientist. "It's also very comprehensive, containing all the critical factors a community needs to evaluate."

Swartzbaugh created the program with Clancy Cross, an associate researcher/program

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analyst with UDRI. SW-Options is an abbreviation of "Solid Waste Management Options for Municipal Planners."

With widespread opposition to new landfills, community planners who often lack experience in solid waste management are being asked to make highly technical decisions.

"SW-Options was designed to transfer technical information on solid waste options to leaders of small communities who have limited technical backgrounds," said Ed Barth, environmental engineer with the U.S. EPA.

With the software package, available from the EPA, a community planner can make a summary evaluation of choices by inserting data on the town's size, area and conditions that affect waste stream. The program projects costs for implementing different options. It also tells a community which options -- or which combination of options -- will reduce the most waste. A keystroke produces background information on various waste management methods.

By using the software, communities can often eliminate steps for outside consultants.

"It's a good starting point. And it makes the use of a consultant more effective, because community planners are much more knowledgeable about the process," he said.

The software can be obtained by sending a blank, high density floppy diskette to: USEPA/CERI Software Distribution Center, 26 W. Martin Luther King Drive, Cincinnati, OH, 45268. Swartzbaugh and Cross previously developed SWAMI, a program that shows industries ways to eliminate the production of waste in manufacturing.